

Part C: Choosing your campaign tactics



Using tactics to activate your campaign

A good tactic has a clear purpose to help your campaign strategy. Time-limited, they are a specific activity, with a specific outcome. When completed, it's worth measuring their impact.

Use a tactic to:

- raise awareness of your issue or concern at workplace level or more widely - regionally or nationally
- encourage people to undertake various actions, helping you identify supporters who will become activists, both now and in the future
- develop a list of supporters who can be contacted further down the campaign trail
- influence those with power to make change happen.

Deciding what you want to achieve

Do you want to get as many members and their colleagues engaged and active in your campaign? Raise awareness of the issue or problem? Let people know the campaign is up and running? Or seek out members who feel similarly?

Tactics should never deride or embarrass individuals within your workplace or community. Rather, they should highlight unsafe systems, ineffective policies, procedures, and other problems. Talk about the people who are impacted and how it affects them.

There are lots of great ideas for effective tactics to promote your campaign, gain support, and secure the changes needed. Here are some used by RCN representatives on different campaigns, with key points to consider.

Petitions

These are easy and are very low cost. They can be online or paper. The RCN has expertise to develop either. But first, decide what you want to achieve. Are you lobbying the government for legislative change? Or are you trying to gain backing for car parking spaces for staff at your workplace?

Never underestimate a petition's impact. You may have heard negative responses along the lines of: 'what's a petition going to do?', 'no one in charge is going to change anything because a few people signed a bit of paper!'

But petitions can:

- raise awareness of the issue in UK Parliament. The UK Parliament petitions website (e-petitions) allows members of the public to create and support petitions and once you achieve 10,000 signatures, the government must respond. At 100,000 signatures, it will be considered by the Petitions Committee for debate in parliament. See www.gov.uk and search 'petitions'
- formalise your 'ask' and make a statement about your issue
- engage people in a conversation about the issue, finding out what they think and feel. Through conversations, you can see who will make good activists - someone willing to take action to help the campaign
- develop your activist base. Asking people to support a petition is a form of 'fast action, low level activism'. People can sign it quickly, feeling good about contributing to the cause
- enable those who sign to ask their family, friends and colleagues to follow suit. This is 'easy action; next level activism'. By talking to their contacts, they are star-
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Posters

Workplaces are ideal for poster campaigns, as they have noticeboards for trade unions. Access the [Portal for Online Design \(POD\)](#) system or for bespoke posters, design your own, with support from your regional or national RCN communications team. Keep them simple in terms of both content and visuals - garish colours detract from the message. Backs of toilets doors are great places to put posters.

Being visible

To effect change locally, be visible to your audience. Walk the wards, sharing your message. Have information to hand and your call to action in mind.

Ballot boxes

If visiting different locations is difficult, think about ballot boxes to gather responses on a specific campaign issue, or collect staff ideas about the issues that matter to them.

Emails

Use emails as a campaign tactic, asking supporters to email their elected representative or whoever has the power to change things. Provide them with a template email, outlining concerns and how the issue can be addressed. Invite supporters to personalise the email, adding in their own experiences. For help, talk to your regional or national RCN communications team.

Using the media

For campaigns needing public support, media attention can help spread the word. But be aware that using the media always carries the risk that you, or your message, is not represented quite as you would wish.

Be mindful of your employer's policy on media activity, which may restrict you speaking out. Seek advice from your regional or national communications team

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